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The Honorable Brian Feldman
The Honorable Cheryl Kagan
Education, Energy, & Environment Committee
Miller Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street
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February 18th, 2025

**SB0932 - Pesticide and Pest Control - State Owned Property - Pesticide Use
Restrictions and Pollinator Habitat**

Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and distinguished members of the Committee,

Senate Bill 932: Pesticide and Pest Control - State-Owned Property - Pesticide Use Restrictions and Pollinator Habitat will protect the pollinators critical to Maryland's ecosystem by limiting their potential exposure to dangerous pesticides and increasing their access to healthy native habitats.

This bill:

- 1) Eliminates the usage of pesticides on state-owned land unless the pesticide is a "Listed Pesticide."
 - a) A "Listed Pesticide" is a pesticide wherein the active ingredients are recommended by the National Organic Standards Board and published on the National List, or a pesticide designated as a "Minimum Risk Pesticide" under the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, And Rodenticide Act or;
 - b) is a "Registered Pesticide". A "Registered Pesticide" is an EPA-approved pesticide only for a specific use or application amount such as controlling invasive species.
- 2) Requires the Department of Natural Resources to develop a plan prohibiting the use of pesticides on 20% of state-owned and managed property. This plan will include and implement best practices for restoration and maintenance of pollinator habitats.

Pesticide contamination is nearly unavoidable in Maryland and across the United States. Since 2007, bee populations have decreased by 80%. Research shows that over 90% of pollen samples¹ from bee hives are contaminated with pesticides, often a pesticide cocktail. The average pollen sample contained six different pesticides - one sample had 31 in a single pollen sample, with wax samples containing up to 39 different pesticides². Even when individual pesticides aren't toxic, the combination of different pesticides can have deadly effects. The Department of Agriculture reports that, "crops valued in excess of \$40 million require or benefit from honey bee pollination in the State³." Pollinators are critical to the health of our ecosystem, the sustainability of our food chain, and our economic well-being.

Reducing and limiting use of pesticides leads to a healthier environment. Senate Bill 932 was modeled off of a piece of Montgomery County legislation implemented in large part due to public health concerns. Pesticides inherently contain toxins, many of which are detrimental to human health. Pesticide exposure has been linked to serious conditions in children including pediatric cancers, decreased cognitive function, and behavioral problems such as ADHD. In adults, pesticide exposure has been connected to cases of Parkinson's disease, diabetes, leukemia, lymphoma, lupus, rheumatoid arthritis, dementia, reproductive dysfunction, Alzheimer's disease, and a variety of cancers⁴. An essential part of this legislation will increase safe places for Maryland families to enjoy the outdoors.

This bill also requires the creation and implementation of a Pesticide and Pollinator Habitat Management Plan. The model Pesticide and Pollinator Habitat Management Plan will:

- 1) Designate at least 20% of the unencumbered land as area that may not be treated by any aesthetic pesticide;
- 2) Prohibit the use of any pesticide known to be toxic to pollinators, even if the pesticide is a Listed Pesticide, unless the appropriate Secretary determines that the use is necessary to respond to a specific instance of threat to public health; and
- 3) When practicable, prioritize the use of native plants to create habitats for key pollinators.

After developing the model, the State will collaborate with the managers of state land to meet the specific needs of each state owned tract. While we coordinate technical aspects of this bill with our partners in the Departments of Agriculture and Natural Resources, we are all in agreement that in order to protect Maryland's pollinators, ecosystems, and human health we must

¹ Mullin, Christopher A., et al. "High Levels of Miticides and Agrochemicals in North American Apiaries: Implications for Honey Bee Health." *PLoS ONE*, vol. 5, no. 3, 19 Mar. 2010, p. e9754, www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2841636/, <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0009754>.

² Frazier, M., et al., What have pesticides got to do with it? *American Bee Journal*, 2008. 148(6): p. 521-523.

³ Department of Agriculture. "Apiary Inspection." *Maryland Department of Agriculture*, mda.maryland.gov/plants-pests/pages/apiary_inspection.aspx.

⁴ Montgomery County, Department of Environmental Protection. "Purpose of Pesticide Lawn, Organic Lawns, Montgomery County, MD Government." *Montgomerycountymd.gov*, www.montgomerycountymd.gov/DEP/property-care/lawns/law/law-purpose.html.

decrease the widespread use of pesticides. Last year the Maryland General Assembly passed SB178, Pollinator Habitat Plan Requirements for the State Highway Administration. This bill continues that important work and makes Maryland a healthier place for all.

I respectfully urge a favorable report.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Karen Lewis Young". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Senator Karen Lewis Young